
Hoverfly identification training and subsequent records from central Scotland

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On 5th and 6th April 2008, 14 participants attended the first Scottish hoverfly identification training course, run by Roger Morris and Stuart Ball, co-ordinators of the Hoverfly Recording Scheme under the aegis of the Dipterists Forum. The course was subsidised by the Blodwen Lloyd Binns Trust and organised by Richard Weddle of the Glasgow Natural History Society on behalf of GNHS, Glasgow Museums and the Hunterian Museum. The aim of these training courses is to provide interested people with the knowledge to identify hoverflies. They are held in parts of Britain where records are lacking (Morris, 2009) with the records being used to contribute to an atlas on hoverfly distribution in Britain.

The initial part of this course was held at the Hunterian Museum (Zoology), Graham Kerr Building at the University of Glasgow. There were presentations on the lifestyles and ecology of various hoverflies and preserved specimens to identify. The second part of the training course was held at the University of Glasgow's Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE), Loch Lomond, on 13th and 14th September 2008. There was a presentation on hoverfly larvae by Graham Rotheray (Curator of Entomology, National Museums of Scotland) with fieldwork to hunt for both larvae and adult flies. In the period between the sections of the course participants were able to work on building up a reference collection.

A total of seventy species were recorded in 2008 by participants of the training course. Records came from all over the region and various habitats from gardens to bogs. The most frequently recorded species was *Eristalis pertinax*, followed by *Helophilus pendulus* and *Platycheirus albimanus*; these are common and widespread in Britain. The least recorded were generally those with a local distribution such as *Didea fasciata* and *Arctophila superbiens*. Others such as *Volucella bombylans* are more widespread and it would be expected to have recorded them more than once (this bumblebee mimic may have been overlooked). Anecdotal evidence from recorders is that several species are under-recorded in this region rather than uncommon. For example *Portevinia maculata* larvae develop in ramson bulbs, a common plant species especially in the Clyde Valley woodlands. This distinctive hoverfly has been frequently observed by

various recorders since the training course. Before then it was reported rarely.

Other interesting records from 2008 (see Table 1) include *Criorhina berberina* at Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton: this species is associated with ancient broadleaved woodlands (Stubbs & Falk, 2002) and has a mainly southern distribution in Britain with few recent records from SW Scotland (Ball and Morris, 2000). A similar distribution is seen in *Cheilosia scutellata* which favours woodland (Stubbs & Falk, 2002) and an adult was recorded on hogweed flowers at Chatelherault (M. Muir, pers. comm.). *Helophilus trivittatus* was found in its usual coastal habitat but was also recorded inland at Blantyre and this may confirm the suspected high mobility of this species (Ball & Morris, 2000; Stubbs & Falk, 2002). There were two records of *Sphegina sibirica* (in North and East Ayrshire) which was added as a British species in 1994 with a centre of population in the Highlands (Stubbs & Falk, 2002). More recent records such as these are improving the distribution knowledge of this species, and could be used to track its extent and rate of spread.

In July 2009 two course participants met at SCENE to hunt for *Syrphus admirandus* Goeldlin, 1996. A preserved specimen of this species was found in the SCENE collection (Morris, 2009). Unfortunately it was unlabelled although it is likely that it was collected in the area about 20-30 years ago. This particular attempt to confirm this as a new species to Britain was not successful. Efforts will continue to establish whether or not a population of this hoverfly does exist in Scotland. To find out more about the recording scheme and hoverflies in general, including the latest distribution maps and species information, visit www.hoverfly.org.uk

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REFERENCES

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- Morris, R. (2009) *Training events*. Hoverfly Newsletter, 46: 4 Bulletin of the Dipterists Forum, No. 67
- Stubbs, A.E. & Falk, S.J. (2002) *British Hoverflies. 2nd edition*. British Entomological and Natural History Society, Reading.

List of hoverflies recorded:

Anasimyia lineata, *Arctophila superbiens*, *Baccha elongata*, *Cheilisia grossa*, *C. illustrata*, *C. pagana*, *C. scutellata*, *C. variabilis*, *Chrysogaster solstitialis*, *Chrysotoxum arcuatum*, *Criorhina berberina*, *Dasyrphus albostrigatus*, *D. venustus*, *Didea fasciata*, *Epistrophe eligans*, *E. grossulariae*, *Episyrrhus balteatus*, *Eristalis abusivus*, *E. arbustorum*, *E. horticola*, *E. interruptus*, *E. intricarius*, *E. pertinax*, *E. tenax*, *Eupeodes corollae*, *E. latifasciatus*, *E. luniger*, *Helophilus pendulus*, *H. trivittatus*, *Lejogaster metallina*, *Leucozona glaucia*, *L. laternaria*, *L. lucorum*, *Melanostoma mellinum*, *M. scalare*, *Meliscaeva auricollis*, *M. cinctella*, *Merodon equestris*, *Myathropa florea*, *Neoascia obliqua*, *N. tenur*, *Pipiza noctiluca*, *Platycheirus albimanus*, *P. ambiguus*, *P. angustatus*, *P. clypeatus*, *P. europaeus*, *P. granditarsus*, *P. nielseni*, *P. peltatus*, *P. perpallidus*, *P. rosarum*, *P. scambus*, *P. sticticus*, *Portevinia maculata*, *Pyrophaena granditarsa*, *Rhingia campestris*, *Scaeva pyrastris*, *Sericomyia silentis*, *Sphaerophoria interrupta*, *S. scripta*, *Sphegina clunipes*, *S. sibirica*, *Syrirta pipiens*, *Syrphus ribesii*, *S. torvus*, *S. vitipennis/rectus*, *S. vitripennis*, *Volucella bombylans*, *V. pellucens*, *Xylota sylvarum*.

Species	Location	Grid ref	Date
<i>Arctophila superbiens</i>	Mugdock Wood, Mugdock	NS545767	06/09/2008
<i>Cheilisia scutellata</i>	Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton	NS734537	24/07/2008
<i>Criorhina berberina</i>	Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton	NS734537	12/05/2008
<i>Didea fasciata</i>	Culzean Country Park, Ayrshire	NS233102	20/07/2008
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>	Seamill, nr West Kilbride	NS203467	10/05/2008
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>	Ayr Gorge Woodlands Nature Reserve, Failford	NS460256	20/05/2008
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>	Chesterhill, Anstruther West	NO563032	04/04/2008
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>	Glasgow Necropolis, Glasgow	NS604654	08/05/2008
<i>Epistrophe eligans</i>	Shewalton Pits Nature Reserve, Shewalton	NS327371	14/05/2008
<i>Eupeodes latifasciatus</i>	Gailes Marsh Nature Reserve, Irvine	NS326357	20/06/2008
<i>Helophilus trivittatus</i>	Seamill, nr West Kilbride	NS203467	03/08/2008
<i>Helophilus trivittatus</i>	David Livingstone Centre, Blantyre	NS694585	07/07/2008
<i>Neoascia obliqua</i>	Coulter, nr Biggar	NT026337	31/05/2008
<i>Pipiza noctiluca</i>	Gailes Marsh Nature Reserve, Irvine	NS326357	29/06/2008
<i>Platycheirus europaeus</i>	Shewalton Pits Nature Reserve, Shewalton	NS327371	14/05/2008
<i>Platycheirus perpallidus</i>	Shewalton Wood Nature Reserve, Shewalton	NS344350	24/06/2008
<i>Platycheirus sticticus</i>	Drumchapel, Glasgow	NS5371	30/06/2008
<i>Sphaerophoria scripta</i>	Gailes Marsh Nature Reserve, Irvine	NS326357	03/06/2008
<i>Sphegina sibirica</i>	Barony Bing, nr Cumnock	NS528212	04/07/2008
<i>Sphegina sibirica</i>	Corsehillmuir Wood Nature Reserve, Kilwinning	NS315434	19/08/2008

Table 1. Selected hoverfly records of species that are scarcely distributed in central Scotland.